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ABSTRACT

Participatory research is an approach that calls for a democratic interaction between the researcher and those among whom the research is conducted. While this approach has been implemented with both individuals and groups in a wide variety of settings such as geographic communities, workplace situations, adult learning groups, community issue groups, and regional and national groups or projects, its composition always consists of the following three interrelated processes: collective investigation of problems and issues with the active participation of the constituency in the entire process; collective analysis, in which the constituency develops a better understanding not only of the problems at hand but also of the underlying structural causes of the problem; and collective action by the constituency aimed at long-term as well as short-term solutions to these problems. The application of these methods may be seen in case studies of participatory research projects throughout the world. (Included in this volume are case studies illustrating the application of participatory research and development techniques such as group discussions, public meetings, research teams, open-ended surveys, community seminars, fact-finding teams, the collective production of audiovisual materials, popular theater, and educational camps.) (MN)

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PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

An Introduction

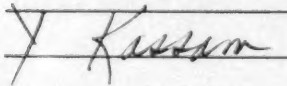
Participatory Research Network Series No. 3

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Contents



<i>Preface</i>	v
What is Participatory Research?	1
Participatory Research in Practice	
Methods	5
Case Studies (Appalachia; Jipemoyo; Chile; India)	26
Issues to Consider	37
Reflections	44
The International Participatory Research Network	47
Selected Bibliography	49

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Preface

"We'll go down if we don't stand up".
Bertolt Brecht

THE *Introduction* is intended for use by workers in the field—educators, trainers, community workers, researchers, community leaders, cooperative groups, village councils, trade unions and others concerned with involving grass-roots people in social action.

It is a collective project of the Participatory Research Network, which is associated with the International Council for Adult Education. This is the first attempt of the network to produce a statement with contributions from all those who have been involved. A difficult process, it has forced us to face the reality that our ideas about what participatory research is and means are quite divergent. A broad range of approaches to social change have emerged from our various points of view, our different contexts and our different skills.

What we share is a commitment to working with those women and men in our different societies whose voices are not heard. We share a belief in the fundamental intelligence of everyone and the right of all to make history and to create knowledge. No matter how compelling, abstract theories are not sufficient to transform the world without the involvement of the vast majority of working people.

The *Introduction* is based on the work of those who have engaged in participatory research to date, and supported and debated with each other in the field, in seminars and workshops and in articles, papers and books. Like all work for social transformation, it is incomplete and transitory. We hope that it will be a starting point for those interested in participatory research and a medium through which we can meet others and learn better ways of expressing ourselves.

It is not easy to acknowledge everybody in a collective work of this kind. Our primary recognition, of course, goes to the individuals, groups and communities who have been the central teachers in participatory research. Translation of experience and putting it to paper has been possible only through the work of many, many people. Information about specific projects comes from papers written by E.K. Mduma, Ji Woong Cheong, Ton de Wit and Vere Gianotten, Ted Jackson, Morten Levin, John Gaventa and Bill Horton, Deborah

Barndt and dian marino, John Niemi and Stephanie Stephens, Ross Kidd and Martin Byram, Vijay Kanhare, Kemal Mustafa and Francisco Vio Grossi.

Al Vigoda and Ted Jackson edited reports on the first International Forum on Participatory Research in Yugoslavia which laid a firm foundation for this popular introduction. Marja-Liisa Swantz, Anton de Schutter, Rajesh Tandon, Budd Hall, Leon Bataille, Paul Bertelsen and Jan de Vries, among others, helped draft the reports.

Substantive critiques of and contributions to the Introduction have come from Liz Sommerlad, Margaret Gayfer, Tom Heaney, Paulo Orefice, Eileen Belamide, Alan Etherington, Pat Ellis, Yusuf Kassam, Linda Harasim, Lucio Teles, Jean Christie, Brian Murphy, and Ngugi wa Mirii, as well as many others. Lynne Dee Trudeau provided creative layout and design material in the early stages. Lynda Yanz has provided perceptive editorial support in the final draft. Grace Contin, Sharon Lavalley, Erma Stultz and Arlene Sullivan have all shared the important task of typing. Shamshad Husain deserves special acknowledgement for his creative and thoughtful drawings. Rajesh Tandon is to be thanked for taking on the responsibilities of publication.

Special thanks must go to UNESCO, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, the International Development Research Centre and the Canadian International Development Agency for financial support.

Without doubt, however, the single person who has worked the longest on the *Introduction*—coordinating, organizing, writing and editing—is Kathleen Jo Tobias, our editor. Without her continual energy and enthusiasm, we would not have persevered through months of correspondence and days of debate. To her and all those who have helped make this possible, we offer our sincere thanks.

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH NETWORK

June, 1982

What is Participatory Research ?

PARTICIPATORY research supports and contributes to the efforts of individuals, groups and movements which challenge social inequality and work to eliminate exploitation. It strives to play a liberating role in the learning process by promoting the development of a critical understanding of social problems, their structural causes and possibilities for overcoming them. It does not claim to be neutral. As a research approach, it calls for democratic interaction between the researchers and those among whom the research is conducted. Democratic interaction depends upon the political participation of those involved in conducting research on the causes of their exploitation with the objective of overcoming the exploitation.

Those who hold economic and political power consolidate their control through a complex web of social institutions—the media, religious institutions, the government, the law and the educational system. The exploited are oppressed by their living and working conditions. They are, for the most part, dependent on the dominant power structure for their livelihood. Oppression assumes psychological and social dimensions which are reinforced by messages, both subtle and overt, transmitted by the social institutions. The oppressed, rather than the unequal power structure, are blamed for their social conditions. The result is that lack of information and the daily preoccupation with survival often prevent people from understanding what the power structure is, how it works and what it does to them. Participatory research challenges the way knowledge is produced by conventional social science research methods and disseminated by educational, social and cultural institutions.

The approach has been implemented with groups and individuals in a wide variety of settings—geographic communities, workplace situations, adult learning groups, community issue groups, and regional and national groups, movements or projects. Participatory researchers have worked with landless labourers and small peasants, indigenous peoples, urban poor, urban and rural migrants, women and workers. Needless to say, very different problems have been addressed in the industrialized, technologically advanced world and in the underdeveloped Third World of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Participatory research is composed of three inter-related processes:

(1) Collective investigation of problems and issues with the active participation of the constituency in the entire process.

(2) Collective analysis, in which the constituency develops a better understanding not only of the problems at hand but also of the underlying structural causes (socio-economic, political, cultural) of the problem.

(3) Collective action by the constituency aimed at long-term as well as short-term solutions to these problems.

In practice, the three processes cannot be separated. Their integration gives participatory research its fundamental strength and power. Processes most closely related to investigation, analysis or action can be identified separately in any participatory research activity, but each process incorporates aspects of the others. Above all, participatory research is a learning process for those involved. The process begins with people's concrete experience and situation and moves to include both theoretical analysis and action aimed at change. Critical evaluation of the success or failure of action also deepens awareness of the concrete reality which people face. Participatory research is, indeed, an educational approach to social change.

Collective discussion and interaction are central to the participatory research approach. People can only understand their situations by learning from their own and each other's experiences. The solutions to social problems are not easy to find. A complete picture will draw on different people's experience and knowledge. No one person acts as the "expert" or "teacher"; those skilled in different areas can and often do play a useful function by supplying important information or skills.

Participatory research often begins with a process called "problem-posing". Participants identify a problem they have in common and want to work together to eliminate it. The problem might be loss of land, lack of water, unemployment, the lack of child care facilities, or the inability to speak publicly and confidently at meetings. Problem-posing not only identifies an issue or a problem but also questions the underlying causes. Understanding how and why a problem exists is essential to taking effective action to eliminate it. This process quite often challenges commonly accepted ideas by asking more and more questions in order to dig beneath conventional explanations of reality. For example, women in a Mexico City barrio were delighted when an agency provided a badly needed medical doctor. However, community workers encouraged them to look critically at their general living conditions. They gradually realized that unemployment, and insufficient supply of clean water, poor housing and malnutrition created a scale of health problems that medical doctors alone could not solve. The women still were pleased that they had access to a doctor but at the same time they began to organize and demand more social services.

Collective discussion, analysis and action does not necessarily lead to complete agreement. There will often be different points of view on what the causes of the problems are and how best to take action to improve the situation. Analysis and action are strengthened through debate and discussion. Disagreements and conflicts are not to be feared; they are part of the process and must be dealt with openly by all those involved so that important issues do not become personalized as bad feelings and individual problems. It is important to recognize that different choices are possible and that the decision should remain within the group. The group may, however, be forced to make a choice that has serious political consequences.

Many of the aspects we now associate with participatory research have been integral to social and political movements for as long as these movements have been around. Participatory research, as an approach within adult and popular education, has a more recent past. It developed in response to inadequacies in conventional research methods in the field of adult education during the 1960s and 1970s. Adult educators and other concerned social scientists struggled to develop a research and educational approach which would lead to practical, effective response to the harsh realities of underdevelopment.

Thus the principles and methods of participatory research derive from many theoretical disciplines within the social sciences and from practical experiences in different skills, concerns and international experience has been essential to the development of participatory research and remains a catalyst for its strength and development.

Basic principles of adult education are a central foundation of participatory research. These principles assume a commitment to adults participating actively in the world, deciding what they want to learn and the best way to learn it. The outdated notions of too old, too poor or too primitive to learn are rejected.

Trends in anthropology were especially important in the initial development of participatory research. Anthropology is one of the few social sciences that has had a tradition of in-depth research at the community level.

Action research has also been influential; it calls for the involvement of local people in posing the research problem and in mobilizing for action with the objective of radical transformation of society.

The concept of "conscientization" and the method of "thematic investigation" developed by Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, have been strong themes in participatory research. Conscientization is described as learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality. In the conscientization process, thematic investigation involves participation in an ever-deepening analysis of words or experiences common to their reality in order to question common assumptions and achieve a better understanding of that reality.

Within the social and political sciences, both phenomenology and historical materialism have had an impact on participatory research. Phenomenology, grounded theory and existential learning are streams which have emphasized subjective learning from experience and attempted to eliminate the distinction made by conventional research between the researcher and the object of the research. In participatory research, the researcher's standpoint shifts away from that of a detached observer and takes up the concerns and issues of the people being worked with.

The notions of class division, conflict and struggle central to historical materialism have been fundamental to thinking in participatory research. These concepts have pushed researchers to recognize the conflicting interests which emerge as groups and movements challenge the status quo. Understanding power structures and relations is an essential component of any processes involving action for change. Historical materialism directs us to investigate the social, political and economic relations which form the context for any problem, investigation or action.

There is now an active international network of people engaged in participatory research. All participants share a dissatisfaction with the existing social order, a commitment to improving the social conditions of minority groups and marginal peoples, and a commitment

to a research and educational process which involves the active participation of local people. There are also differences among those involved in participatory research which often makes for lively and challenging debate and discussion. Some of the concrete issues in the debate are:

Ideological analyses and objectives: for instance, the notion of class struggle leading to radical social change versus the notion of dialogue and adjustment leading to social reform.

Strategies appropriate for different social, economic and political contexts.

The priority of long-term versus short-term objectives.

Transfer of control of the participatory research process from outside researchers to the local constituency.

Methods appropriate for facilitating investigation, analysis and action.

The importance of making links with community activists and social movements.

The place of participatory research in the social sciences.

The relevance of conventional social science research methods to participatory research.

Participatory research is not a recipe for social change. It is a democratic approach to investigation and learning to be taken up by individuals, groups and movements as a tool aimed at social change. We do not, however, under-estimate the obstacles to effective social change. Critical analysis and evaluation of participatory research in terms of both short and long-term goals is essential and must be an on-going and integral component of our work.

Participatory Research in Practice

PARTICIPATORY research is taking place around the world. In this *Introduction*, we look at work with peasants or landless labourers in Chile, Peru, Botswana, Tanzania, India, South Korea and an unidentified Third World country; union workers in Norway; Native People and immigrant women in Canada; urban blacks and rural industrial workers in the United States.

Examples presented here are by no means exhaustive. By and large, they represent work carried out in 1970s, it being the nature of written reflection and publications to follow several years after work in the field.

Two different approaches are taken to our description, discussion and analysis of participatory research in practice. In the first, we look at methods used in participatory research, including group discussions, public meetings, research teams, open-ended surveys, community seminars, factfinding tours, collective production of audio-visual materials, popular theatre and educational camps. Although methods used in participatory research are exciting and important they can only be part of a participatory research process.

The second section includes several detailed case studies of entire participatory research experiences. They include critical reflection on the process by participants in the work.

METHODS

Both time-honoured and innovative methods are used in participatory research, and the variations are endless. Methods may serve many purposes:

- promote the production of *collective knowledge*: the investigation and presentation of a social reality by the group(s) living it, with the sense of *group ownership* of the information;
- promote *collective analysis*: the ordering of information in ways useful to the group in examining their reality;

- promote critical analysis by groups and individuals: using the ordered information to determine the root causes of problems and issues apparent in the constituency, with a view to finding solutions to them;
- promote the building of relationships between personal and structural problems as part of the collective problem solving process;
- link reflection and evaluation with action, taking time to ask who, what, why, where, when?

The methods may be used only once, or repeatedly, and at any point in the participatory research process—investigation, analysis and/or action. Participants in the process need to give careful consideration to which methods to use and when.

It is extremely important that any method be used only where appropriate to local cultural, economic and political conditions. A participatory researcher should make an effort to be sure that methods complement rather than supplant indigenous forms of expression, communication, discussion and decision-making.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Usually, small numbers (8, 12, 25) of people come together for the general purpose of solving problems by sharing experiences, information and support. Group discussions are probably the most widely used method in participatory research. They occur throughout the process, and are often used together with other methods.

Sometimes the group only meets once. A community meeting, for instance, might break into small groups. Sometimes the group meets periodically over a long time; for instance, a constituency may be divided into many groups which meet regularly during a project.

USES

Pose problems, identify causes, discuss possible solutions and evaluate actions.

Create a situation in which people feel comfortable and free to speak, or sing, or draw, or perform a drama.

Build a sense of trust, support and solidarity among people who share the same problems but may not know it until they talk with each other.

Serve as efficient interviews. The information can be recorded in notes, on audiotape or on videotape.

Use the labour of a large group of people efficiently by assigning particular topics or tasks to small groups.

Periodic group discussions are a good way of maintaining communication among people who are separated in their day-to-day work by geography or by time commitments.

Tanzania: Grain Storage

As much as 30-40% of grain harvests in Tanzania have been lost annually. Much is destroyed by rats and insects at the village and family level due to inadequate storage facilities. A team of government extension workers, adult educators, technical experts and researchers spent eight weeks in the village of Bwakira Chini, during the 1976 harvest season. The objective of the project was to draw on existing village scientific knowledge of grain storage problems in the design of an appropriate storage silo. The research team worked together with village representatives on a grain storage sub-committee set up under the Village Assembly.

Peasant members of the grain storage sub-committee were all well-to-do farmers who had already made use of Western technology. The outside research team therefore worked to emphasize the needs of the poorer peasants for inexpensive grain storage methods.

One strategy encouraged the sub-committee to set up a system of group discussions that would allow a cross-section of peasants to talk to each other. Discussions were scheduled in four areas of the village.

On the whole, the format worked successfully. Sometimes poor organization and preparation made it necessary for sub-committee members to round up participants for the discussions at the last minute. Since the size of the groups in the four areas was large, some people were not able to contribute to the discussions.

If participants agreed, the discussions were tape recorded to ensure that important remarks were not missed. They were replayed after the meeting for participants who wanted to hear them. Sub-committee members listened to the tapes and brought up important points at the next group discussion.

After several discussions, the research team artist produced drawings of existing grain storage methods and the modifications suggested by villagers and research consultants. It was during these discussions that the research consultants could contribute to the design from their understanding of modern science and technology.

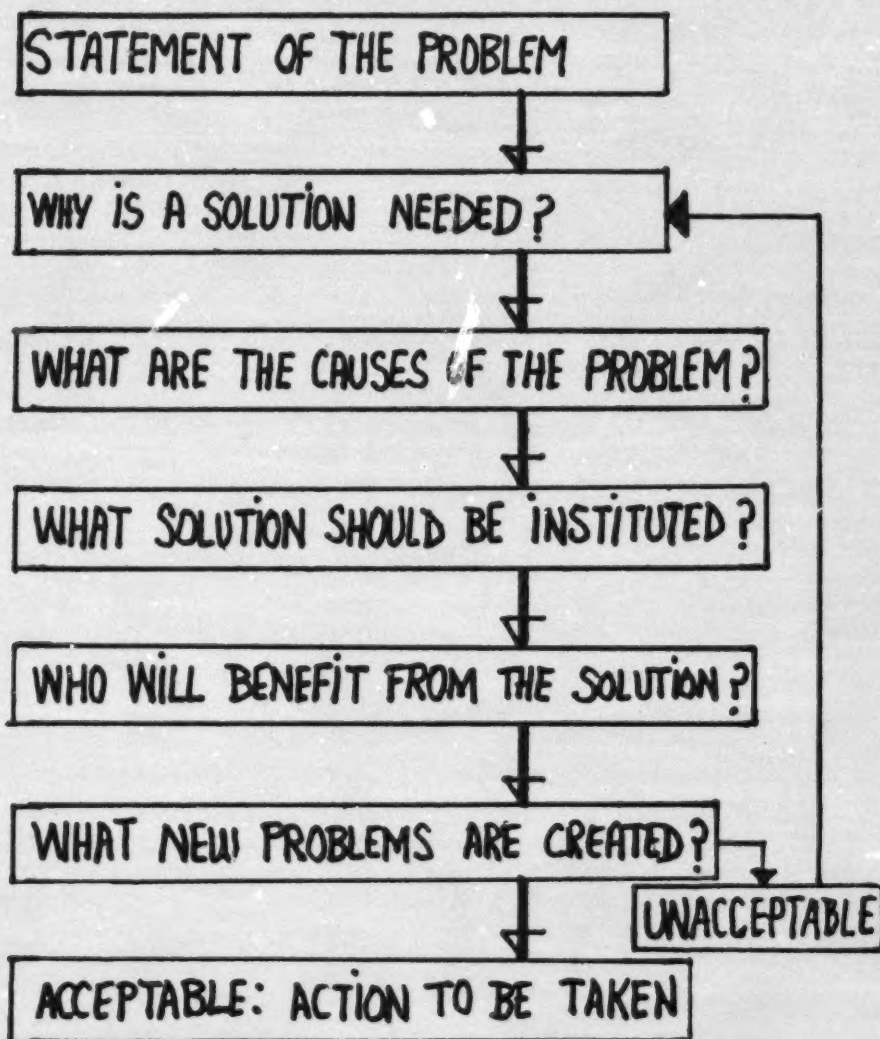
In group discussions over an eight-week period, villagers:

- studied ten traditional grain storage methods;
- considered related environmental problems like pests, animals and weather;
- analyzed social and economic factors such as by-laws of the village; customs and beliefs; land distribution; credit facilities and production; marketing and storage relations.

Villagers agreed on an improved model and built more than 15 structures with a capacity of 25 tons. The modified "dunga" was elevated to above four feet and constructed taking into account wind direction, distance from the main house, trees and other agents which might help rat or insect infestation. Rain protection was improved and rat guards were fixed on the supporting posts above one metre from the ground.

Botswana: Rural Development Research

The Rural Industries Innovation Centre combines a research and extension function with the design of appropriate technologies for rural development. In one project, they trained teams of fieldworkers to interview members of every village development committee in the



district about rural problems. The interviews were open-ended and attempted to engage the participants in a dialogue on their situation. The purpose of the interviews was to get participants started on developing an understanding of the causes of their situation and identifying some possible solutions. The interview format was designed to challenge surface level perceptions and to encourage participants to think critically about what they said.

Not wanting to sell technologies, interviewers asked participants to assess the suitability of each proposed technology—its raw materials, design, usefulness, cost and acceptability.

This round of interviews and discussion was only the first stage of continuing involvement of villagers in planning their own development.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

General open meetings to which all members of a constituency are invited. (They vary in terms of depth of discussion and scope of decision making). In some communities, public meetings are held regularly as an institution of local government.

USES

Inform the constituency about the research as it progresses.

Obtain and maintain constituency approval and support for the research project.

Provide an opportunity for all members of the constituency to contribute to the design and implementation of the research project.

Interest more constituency members in playing an active role in the research project—to join small group discussions, to interview and be interviewed, to contribute labour and know-how to particular activities, such as the development of a cooperative store or the building of an irrigation canal.

South Korea: Women's Cooperative Store

As part of the New Community movement to improve economic conditions in rural areas, a fieldworker from the Seoul National University College of Agriculture worked for a year (1975-76) in Bangchuk Village.

After a month of interviews and work with various village groups in Bangchuk Village, it became clear to the fieldworker that many women wanted to re-establish a Women's Club which had failed some time before.

The fieldworker called a meeting for all women who were interested in reorganizing the Women's Club. Thirty women became members of the Club, set dues, elected officers and adopted a constitution. They decided to develop a cooperative store that would allow them to get food and consumer items as inexpensively as possible. They formally agreed to use participatory research so that all members would be involved in the cooperative store project.

At the second meeting, the Women's Club laid the ground work dealing with several obstacles to setting up a cooperative store. They organized a number of small groups to work on getting approval of village leaders, who were mostly male and the husbands of members; to recruit as many women to join the Club as possible and to search for the cheapest sources of wholesale goods in the nearest town.

The women also anticipated political problems and decided on ways to approach them:

The one private store in the village was operated by a poor family of the major village clan. The Women's Club officers invited the store owner and two village leaders to a planning meeting. Village leaders agreed to find another job for the store owner.

The village had two major factions based in two sub-areas of the village. The Club was afraid that the two factions would not cooperate on one store. The Club assigned a woman from each sub-area to sell Korean liquor, so that each faction would benefit economically from the store. Members also studied cooperative activities in other villages to see what lessons they could learn.

Within a year the cooperative store was operating successfully, and so was the Women's Club.

Peru: Rural Development Training

Participatory research has been adopted by the Program of Integrated Rural Development of the University of Huamanga to draw on popular culture and technology to develop improved crop cultivation and cattle raising methods appropriate to the needs of highland people.

Research teams from the Program lived in the communities and worked with the peasants while they did a preliminary socio-economic study of the area. Following the study, they developed specific proposals for training programs. They discussed the proposals with peasants at the Allpachaka Centre in Ayacucho and then presented them to the communal assemblies, which are traditional political structures. Agreement of communal assemblies to a project was just the first step toward getting the approval and participation of the whole community, but it was an important step.

An irrigation canal was a major project undertaken with communal assembly approval. The community had identified lack of water as a major problem. After researchers conducted technical studies which demonstrated that a canal could be built from a spring to the village, the whole community helped build the canal, which increased the number of irrigated fields ten-fold.

RESEARCH TEAMS

Local constituency members and/or outside research consultants, technical experts.

USES

The constituency can be sure it is included in planning and carrying out the research democratically.

The constituency can monitor the research process.

Canada: Reserve Water Supply and Sewage Disposal

No Indian houses on the remote Northern Big Trout Lake Indian Reserve in Ontario have running water or flush toilets. Where sub-zero temperatures prevail most of the year, most Indian People haul water from the lake, which is polluted by raw sewage, and use pit latrines. In the early 1970s, the powerful Federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) proposed a costly new sewage disposal system for the white community.

The Band Council used its legal powers to stop the project and, after lengthy negotiations with the government, obtained the right to conduct their own environmental assessment of the water supply and sewage disposal problem and to develop an appropriate system that would benefit Native People as well as whites in the community.

During the project, two teams worked together and shared responsibilities as the Community Assessment Committee. A technical team from Southern Ontario included a sanitary engineer, a limnologist, an environmental health specialist and a participatory research specialist. They lived with the Native People, paid room and board, hauled water and helped cook the meals. Their research included:

- Chemical analysis of water sources and the existing sewage pond at the school.
- Assessment of the proposed government sewage system from reports and interviews with members of the Band Council.
- A Survey of Native and non-Native water sources.
- A Survey of the ways in which Native people obtain their water and use their water.
- A Survey of excreta disposal systems and practices for Native and non-Native households.
- Informal interviews with Native families in their homes.
- Small group discussions at general meetings and group interviews with the Band Council.
- Collection of documents on water and waste issues in Canada's North and in developing countries.

The second team was from the Reserve. They helped collect and analyze information, organized community meetings and broadcast information about the research on the radio.

A major technical report was written by the team of consultants. It was not possible for the Band Council to participate in writing the report because of other demands made on their time by the community at the time.

The Band Council defended recommendations in the report with a Band Council resolution, which the government is bound to follow. However, the government has stalled any implementation of the proposals. Four years after the project ended, women in Big Trout Lake continue to haul water by hand and latrines continue to clog and overflow in the Spring.

Norway: Quality of Working Life

Provisions in the Norwegian Law on Worker Protection and Work Environment give unions the right to participate in the design of new data-processing technology. Unions, however, are at a disadvantage because they have very little data-processing experience, while management has highly trained specialists.

The Norwegian Chemical Workers Union initiated a research project to develop ways for the union to evaluate the impact of new technologies on working life *before* they are introduced into the workplace.

The union obtained a grant of \$200,000 to hire three research consultants from the Institute for Industrial Social Research and the Norwegian Computing Centre. Three members of the participating union local—two elected shop stewards and one long-time union member—worked together with the consultants. The experience of the three spanned the entire 25-year history of the plant.

The report concluded that technological development results in fragmentation of jobs, reduces the need for skill and dehumanizes the workplace. The report was discussed within the union local and raised awareness about the problems that inappropriate technology can introduce into the workplace. The local introduced ideas for applying this kind of research to all departments within the company and established a network with data-processing shop stewards in the company's other two factories. Union members of the team have also given lectures and led workshops for union colleagues in other branches of the chemical industry.

The union has refused to accept a new Japanese built technology on the grounds that they did not have enough information to judge the impact on the quality of working life and that investment in a complete foreign technology is against laws on working conditions.

A drawback to the research project was that only three local members were intensively involved and consequently learned most from the experience. Ideally, all workers should be engaged in building knowledge about factors affecting their working conditions.

OPEN-ENDED SURVEYS

A fairly large number of people in the constituency are interviewed using a flexible format that allows the interview to follow the interests of the person being interviewed. The interview may also be held with small groups.

USES

Obtain a picture of how a large number of people feel about a problem—what its causes are; possible solutions; personal consequences.

Involve individuals in the constituency in the task of problem-posing in the research process.

A Third World Country: Organizing Farmer Settlers

The desire for land has led farmers to migrate to and clear an inhospitable area since the late 1930s. However, in 1952, a corporation acquired legal title to the land and began to plant it with a cash crop and to evict the settlers. The settlers are challenging the corporation in court while at the same time preparing for armed self-defence against corporate and government harassment. They are working to strengthen their own and other peasant organizations. A private community development agency trains community organizers and farmer-settlers to use participatory research in their struggle.

Following a six-month training problem, a farmer-settler trainee returned to begin research in the village. His tasks were to get a picture of different class interests relating to land ownership, and to involve the farmer-settlers who were being deprived of their land in identifying ways to take action on the problem.

The trainee recruited seven research "partners" from among the elders and recognized leaders in the village. In turn, the seven partners were able to recruit their own partners from among relatives of people who came from the same province of origin.

The researchers collected information during informal discussions on a wide variety of occasions: house-to-house visits; baptisms; weddings; lunchbreaks under the trees; on the way to market; while washing laundry in the river; while hunting; while farming.

Information was discussed and analyzed among the researchers at formal meetings, where they also considered plans for action. Skills in doing the research and analyzing the information were transferred to farmer-settlers more as the number of recruits increased. The research team also organized a village seminar during which the entire village made extensive use of the information in analyzing problems.

United States: Land Ownership Patterns in Appalachia

Increasing absentee ownership of land in Appalachia by corporations is diverting the use of the land from agriculture to coal mining and tourist recreation. In 1978, a coalition of citizen's groups negotiated with the government to do a six-state study of how land ownership affects the settlement and use of the land.

The project planned a research design that would gather information broad enough for regional impact and specific enough for local action. As a complement to statistical data collected across 80 counties, the project conducted 20 in-depth case studies to show the relationship of land use patterns to such things as jobs, environment, housing, local power structures, taxes, education and services.

Interviews for the exploratory case studies were designed in a very loose way so that assumptions would not be imposed on the community by the interview. Fieldworkers were given the freedom to use their own ideas and contacts during the research.

A checklist for the case studies included relationships to be explored, types of persons to interview, and data sources to use. As fieldworkers started asking questions locally and moved from one source to another, a picture of land ownership developed which would not have been revealed by a standard research design.

The project took the position that the state of knowledge about the impact of land ownership made a conventional, "scientific" interviewing procedure across the region inappropriate. Participants felt that the results justified their open-ended approach:

The open-ended, locally-based approach brought out a depth of feeling and vividness of expression about corporate absentee ownership which would not otherwise have been heard. Appalachian people would have been highly cautious in response to a standard questionnaire implemented by outsiders.

The informal approach allowed the development of a relationship with those being interviewed that laid the foundation for follow-up action and organization.

COMMUNITY SEMINARS

These are intensive study sessions which may be held among members of one community, among members of several communities, or among members of a community and outside institutions, such as government agencies, universities and private community development organizations.

USES

Discuss and analyze information obtained in the research in order to plan the next steps in research and community action.

Share information and plan research and action strategies with other outside groups.

Use information obtained in the research to analyze the power structure within which the community problem arises.

In general, community seminars can be an important means of communication between communities or organizations and outside institutions.

Tanzania: Grain Storage

The research team of the Bwakira Chini grain storage project organized a one week seminar which brought Bwakira Chini villagers together with people from 15 other villages. The purpose was to use the Bwakira Chini project as a case study to teach participants innovations in grain structures and the use of insecticides. Villagers exchanged information in discussion groups and planned projects for their own villages.

On another occasion the Bwakira Chini grain storage committee presented a case study of their project to third year agriculture students at the University of Dar es Salaam. Students asked many questions about the technical and social implications of the changes in grain storage methods adopted by the project. Committee members found that group discussions which had been held in the village throughout the project prepared them well for a heated debate.

Canada: Reserve Water Supply and Sewage Disposal

A community seminar was called by the Health Committee to explain the results of the water supply and sewage disposal study. One hundred copies of the report summary in Nishnawbe and fifty English copies were distributed. The report recommended that greater quantities of water should be made available to the Native households through rainwater collection, repaired wells, a street tap system, and a trucked water delivery system. It recommended that the outhouse system be improved with rubber liners, berming and vents.

Using slides, the consultants explained the proposed four-pond sewage treatment system and the technology for pumping waste from outhouses with rubber lining.

Participants concluded that costs and location of the ponds for sewage treatment were the most important issues. They also planned sessions for handpump training and installation of the rubber outhouse liners.

A Third World Country: Organizing Farmer Settlers

Following a six-month training course, a rural organizer encouraged a village of peasant settlers to begin a participatory research process. Members of the village conducted interviews, and set up small study groups. After some time, they held a three-day seminar in order to gain a deeper understanding of the socioeconomic structures within which their dispute over land ownership existed. They wanted to determine the next steps to take in solving the dispute.

Rural organizers from a nearby area who had longer work experience were invited to facilitate the seminar, which focussed on identifying links among economic, political and cultural structures at local, national and international levels.

The settlers saw more clearly who were for them and who were against them:

The current political and economic situation in the country escalated their problems.

Government agencies and officials acted in the interest of the corporation which had been given title to the land.

If the settlers organized or mobilized, the government would call them subversive rebels.

The corporation had easy access to the key government agencies because high officials were relatives of corporate executives.

During the election, the incumbent mayor promised to support the settlers' land claim, but after he won the election, he tried to persuade the settlers to vacate the land as the court had ordered.

The Ministry of Agriculture advised the settlers to sign the leasehold agreements with the corporation. However, the settlers resisted because it was a trick which would make them stop claiming the land as their own. They would have to pay back rent to the corporation, and they could not afford the rent.

A deliberate attempt to transfer research and analytical skills to the farmer-settlers has helped them to understand the broader context within which their problems occur. Formerly, the perception of the land question was localized and farmer-settlers saw the problem

simply as a question of fighting for their legal rights to the land. Through a cyclical process of research, action and reflection, they now see that the struggle for land is part of a much wider struggle with national and global implications. They realize that the existing social, economic and political system has given the corporation the power to claim their land and keep it.

Perceptions of the Church are also changing. Biblical study is always part of discussions among the villagers, and the concept of the Church as the community working for liberation is an important theme.

The cohesiveness of the village, formerly based on kinship and province of origin, is now shifting to a base in the common struggle. Reliance on traditional social and political leaders is weakening. Grass-roots villagers play a greater role in decision-making. Villagers are also making links with other farmer-settlers whose land is threatened by corporate takeover.

FACTFINDING TOURS

Usually, a group of people from one constituency visit other groups or communities which have been working on solving the same kind of problems, or they may go to a city where government agencies and other groups who support their work are located. They can find out about possibilities for getting funding, and they can share ideas and experiences with support groups.

USES

Find out what can be accomplished.

Find out the kinds of political, social, and economic obstacles which need to be faced.

Find people in other areas who can act as resource people periodically while the group is doing its work.

Get a better idea of the time and money and kind of community support needed to carry out the project.

Find out that people in other communities share the same concerns and are working to solve similar problems.

Begin to build a support network across a region or country or even internationally for future activities and for political action.

Canada: Reserve Water Supply and Sewage Disposal

Two male Health Committee members, a woman elder and a research consultant travelled from Big Trout Lake to Baker Lake in Canada's North-West Territories. Baker Lake had a community wide trucked water delivery service and a sewage pumpout system serving 1,000 residents.

Baker Lake leaders received the Big Trout Lake team warmly. The team interviewed residents, studied documents on the water and waste system and observed the system in operation. They also took lots of photographs.

During the tour the team met to discuss what they had learned, what additional information they needed and what they needed to do to get the information.

Back in Big Trout Lake, the team held a community meeting where they displayed the photographs of the Baker Lake System and discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the system.

COLLECTIVE PRODUCTION OF AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

Groups use available resources to plan and create audio-visual materials which represent, explain and/or analyze one or more aspects of the problem they are focussing on. Group discussions are an important part of the process of production. Groups have produced drawings, photo-stories, photographs, video-tapes, slide-tape shows, photo-montages and films. Materials used depend on available resources. Drawing, for instance, is the most accessible—all you need are a pencil and paper or blackboard and chalk. Although cameras are portable, the cost of camera, film and developing facilities may limit possibilities for using photography. The cost of necessary production and playback equipment and materials for video-tape make this method a luxury in most parts of the world.

USES

Provide a form of expression other than words when participants are uncomfortable with words, or when words do not seem to be advancing the research process; for instance, when a group finds itself "going around in circles".

Build and strengthen the group through a shared work experience.

Develop a common understanding of the problem through the planning, discussion and production of a shared statement.

Produce educational materials which can be used to discuss the problem with other members of the constituency or other communities or groups.

Learn that audio-visual skills can be acquired by and used by people in the constituency, taking the media out of exclusive control of so-called experts and radio and T.V. networks.

Canada: Rural Water Supply and Sewage Disposal

The activity of drawing helped women on the Big Trout Lake Indian Reserve relate to the technical report on water supply and sewage disposal. Thirteen women met with two local

community health representatives to evaluate the technical choices that were suggested in the report. One native woman acted as a discussion leader and presented an oral and written summary of the long report. Since the women did not enter into an active discussion, she asked the women to draw the layout of their homes—a simple diagram of rooms, doors, etc. They were then able to see how the different options would affect their living situation. They began to ask questions about the report and proved themselves to be the true experts. For example, they developed ideas for heating handpumps in the winter to prevent freezing, and for restructuring attics to permit the installation of storage tanks there.

The momentum of women's participation in the project led to a regional participatory research study on the educational needs of Native women.

Canada: A Photo-Story

In an English Class for immigrant women working in a Toronto factory, several lessons focussed on images of women presented in the mass media. While reviewing a subway advertisement for make-up entitled "For all the Women You Are" the class decided to list "All the Women *we* really are".

Class participants named the many roles they play each day, including mother, housewife, cook, laundress, shopper, worker etc. They decided to make their own version of the advertisement, using photographs that related their own lives.

One of the teachers went to the home of a Chinese woman to take photographs while the woman cooked a Chinese meal and the family prepared to eat it. In class, the Chinese woman selected the photographs she wanted to use to tell her story, and arranged them in order on the wall. A teacher helped construct the dialogue by asking questions such as: "What are you doing here?" and "What are you saying here?"

The teacher wrote down exactly what the woman said, making only grammatical corrections. A key line of the woman's story, "Here I am washing the dishes while my husband sits down", sparked a lively discussion about housework and the double day of immigrant women workers.

The story brought out other issues: children's involvement in housework; sex role stereotypes in curriculum materials; conflicts between immigrant parents and their children who are adapting faster to the new society; and differences between the role of women in Canada and in other countries.

During classes that followed, the women began to compare frustrations and ideas about how to deal with them. They felt great pressure to change in Canada, but they were unsure how to do it or what the consequences might be.

The Chinese woman and her husband decided that they didn't want people outside the class to see the photographs, because people sometimes make fun of immigrants. Since the class felt that the story was a good one and should be used in other places, they decided to make it more general so that it could apply to any immigrant family. They replaced the photographs with drawings done by the second teacher; substituted husband, wife, and children for names in the dialogue; and chose the title, "A Family Story".

United States: Urban Media Project

The population of Southwest Rockford, a low-income community within the city of Rockford, Illinois, is predominantly black and includes Italians and Latinos. A majority of the 20,000 residents have incomes near the poverty level, live in substandard housing and have low levels of education. The many community organizations, funded by municipal government, have had a history of poor communication and little cooperation.

The Rockford Interactive Media Project was initiated in 1978 by a group of community activists and the Community Services Office of Northern Illinois University. Its primary objective was to make the technology of video communications available to ordinary citizens as an organizing tool, to communicate with each other, as well as with local government officials. Television, controlled by large networks and their sponsors, has served the oppressive purpose of conveying life and death decisions made by remote government bureaucracies to the urban poor.

An active community member was hired to coordinate the project and space was provided in a central storefront location. After her own training by technical consultants, the coordinator trained community participants to use the video equipment. Trainees were largely recruited through her broad contacts in the community, and she played an important role in promoting the project with community organizations, including cable T.V. radio.

Projects with over twenty community groups and organizations were initiated in the first year, after which the assistance of Northern Illinois University was no longer needed. The coordinator returned to a community-based organization to work and community members continued to use the equipment on their own.

In one year, forty-five citizens were trained to use the equipment. Four trainees learned to edit raw tapes as well, so that the community could control the final form of the video material. Activities fell into two major categories: documentation for information and documentation for public advocacy.

Documentation for information was used for both internal reflection within the participating community groups and for general public education. Subjects included a tour of Southwest Rockford; a house meeting for epileptics; church involvement in social action and a rape psychodrama. Documentation for public advocacy involved challenges to bureaucratic and government decisions.

A government-funded work crew of 18 men who worked with Operation Facelift, a community improvement project, was cut by the government agency. Interactive Media trainees were asked to make a tape that could be used to protest against the decision. Most of the men had been hired recently and did not have an established work record for the private sector, although their work record on the job was excellent. The documentary interviewed workers, recipients of services and administrators of the Operation Facelift Project. The cuts were upheld by the government. However, participants in the documentary appreciated the opportunity to voice their concerns and to gain reconsideration of the issue.

When branch libraries were threatened with closure, a librarian called on the project to document the issue. After viewing an initial tape about the problem at a meeting between branch managers and the library Board, the Board chairperson responded in a tape which was shown to library staff and members of the branch communities. The Board proposed a ten-cent user fee on each borrowed book as a financial measure to keep the branches open.

A tape featuring interviews with fifty users from all levels of society and other public responses via the mass media forced the Board to withdraw the user fee proposal.

After a referendum asking voters to approve an increase in the library tax on property assessment was defeated, the branch libraries were temporarily closed. The branch in Southwest Rockford, however, was reopened within six months due to community protest.

Another issue led to the creation of a solid new community committee—the Committee to Retain the Interactive Media Project (CRIMP). At the end of the first year, the government funding office tried to repossess the video equipment, although it had initially promised to leave the equipment with the community. 20 diverse community members who had participated in the media project, organized the protest. They used the equipment as a tool against the government officials, who eventually gave in and left the equipment with the community. CRIMP assumed responsibility for the equipment.

POPULAR THEATRE

A dramatic representation of local problems, popular theatre speaks to people in their language and deals with problems of direct relevance to their situation. It is popular because it attempts to involve the whole constituency and not just a small elite determined by class or education. Kept rough and simple, it operates on the principle that anyone can learn to play a role, improvise a dialogue or handle a puppet. An inexpensive method for consciousness-raising and problem-posing, popular theatre is accessible to the poorest people.

Performances are based on improvisation and the plot line is worked out by the actors themselves, who develop their dialogue, gestures and action in response to each other and the audience. Therefore, the activity increases self-confidence which has often been damaged by the formal, foreign educational system imposed on traditional cultures.

USES

As entertainment, it can attract and hold the interest of large number of people.

As an oral method of communication in local languages, it can involve the poorest groups who are often left out of development activities because of illiteracy or lack of understanding of English.

An appropriate technology, it can be produced locally, unlike photographs, film or videotape, which require special, costly materials and human skills.

An already familiar practice, it can reinforce and build on widespread local traditions of story-telling, singing and dancing.

As a collective expression and a communal activity, it creates an environment for cooperative rather than individual thinking and action. Participants can learn from each other rather than from an expert. People are good at creating their own dramas because:

it draws on traditional forms of culture and communication;

the problems are their problems.

Botswana: "Laedza Batanani"

LAEDZA BATANANI: *"The sun is already up. It's time to wake up and come together for a common effort".*

A rallying activity, popular theatre is used to spark people's interest and involvement in community development work. Since villagers are naturally good at drama, take part in it with little self-consciousness and enjoy doing it, it has proven to be a good medium for including local people in a national community education program focussing on community problems. For once, villagers can be involved in presenting the program through drama and not be limited to responding as an audience.

In the program, participation is seen both as:

A goal of the program (to mobilize a large number of villagers in discussing and taking action on important local issues); and

An important aspect of the methodology (community members were expected to help in planning and running the education/animation program).

In an annual one-week "campaign", a team of extension workers and community leaders tour the six major villages in the region with a program of popular theatre performances and community discussion. The campaign is preceded by a participatory planning process involving two major events:

a community planning workshop attended by traditional leaders, village development workers, and leaders of other community organizations. The participants, working in groups, list community problems, select one or two as priorities, and then improvise short skits to illustrate the problems.

an actors' workshop, in which a smaller group of extension workers and community leaders take the priority problems and create a more polished performance (including puppet skits, songs and dances) that will tour through the villages.

Themes for the campaigns are chosen on the basis of the following criteria:

A modest target which groups can easily achieve; problems which require a local response rather than government action; something concrete and specific; problems that individual families or groups can solve; and problems whose solution can easily be supported by regular extension work. The final yardstick for choosing themes is realism. Only problems that are considered amenable to change are introduced.

A "constraint analysis" approach is taken in an attempt to get away from prescribing textbook slogans (such as "Good nutrition means three balanced meals a day") and in an effort to take account of villagers' perceptions. This involves listing people's knowledge, attitudes and practice with respect to each problem; identifying the key constraints (such as lack of resources); and deciding which constraints might be successfully challenged and which current practices should be built on and supported. Through this analysis, participants work out a

clear set of objectives and problems to be presented as a preliminary step to developing the script for the drama, puppet play, dance or song.

For example, in discussions on venereal disease (VD), some workshop participant felt the practice of traditional medicine should be discouraged. In the end, the workshop decided that such an attitude would only antagonize people. The drama highlighted these issues:

VD is not a 'women's disease' (it is not caused by intercourse during menstruation; men and women can both transmit the disease).

What is wrong is ignoring or hiding the VD symptoms and not getting treatment.

Since VD is particularly difficult to detect in women, men should take the responsibility to tell their partners if they themselves have it.

The campaign normally takes place in the period immediately before the ploughing season (September-October). Representatives from each village form an organizing committee to plan and publicize the campaign and to organize logistical support such as firewood, water, accommodation for the actors, etc. The team of actors organizes an afternoon program in each of six villages. Mornings are spent travelling to the next village; meeting with local leaders; evaluating the previous day's performance; making appropriate changes; setting up a stage backdrop and puppet stage; and publicizing the community event. A few of the actors drive around the village singing the campaign songs and inviting people to the event, through a megaphone.

In mid afternoon the performance starts—a mixed program of two or three drama sketches, a puppet show, and several songs. After the last song, the actors move immediately into the audience inviting them to form groups to discuss the problems and possible solutions. Afterwards everyone reassembles and each group gives its report. The chairperson summarizes the major proposals and tries to get some consensus on action to be taken. The performance is a community event with all ages in attendance. However, during the discussion, one or two of the actors organize a children's event of songs, puppetry and traditional dancing. This is preferable to involving the children in the discussion or sending them home.

In follow-up programs, fieldworkers receive special training and support materials so that they can teach and encourage new practices. For instance, family welfare educators have performed dramas on VD and given talks and cooking demonstrations to women attending clinics. Agricultural demonstrators have run vegetable gardening courses and issued seeds to families who wanted to set up vegetable gardens.

Peru: A Campesino Drama

In the early 1970s, class struggle in Peru was intense. Peasants and rural workers formed organizations and strikes, demonstrations and other forms of militant action. Land reform had been initiated by the military government, but the regime rapidly became more conservative and instituted State control of confiscated land. One campesino union grew impatient with waiting to be allotted land and occupied the land of several absentee landlords in their area. They organized themselves to defend the occupation with a system of sentries on all entrances to the area, solidarity agreements with truck drivers to keep them supplied with

food, etc. A government land reform official came out to ask them to return the land and wait for government reforms to take effect. The campesinos refused and sent the bureaucrat away. He returned later, offered the campesinos one block of land and promised more in the future. Again they refused.

This process continued with increasing offers of land each time in exchange for the return of the remaining land. On one of these visits one of the organizers, Mrs. Yuyi, got so fed up with the delaying tactics that she grabbed the bureaucrat by the neck, lifted him up and said, "Listen, you little worm, we want all the land—now!"

Eventually the campesinos were given the land, but they were organized into a cooperative which became controlled by government bureaucrats. In effect, they became labourers on a state farm.

One year after the occupation, an educational agency which had worked with the campesino leaders encouraged them to look critically at their experience. The leaders decided they must extend this possibility for reflection to the whole campesino organization. They prepared a rough drama for presentation at a rally which was being organized by the government co-op officers.

After several hours of official speeches, the campesinos, seated in an open field, became very hot, tired and bored. The drama group began to perform in the middle of the crowd, ignoring the stage. Explaining that the drama would deal with their life before, during and after the occupation, they asked people to interrupt if they disagreed with the history or if something was left out. At the end of the first scene, someone stood up and shouted: "Yes, campaneros, that was the way it was before our struggle started...." Everyone began to talk at once and to make comments. This was their history, the story of their struggle, being re-enacted before their eyes.

During the scene about confrontation with government, one woman shouted: "Hey, I'm going to be Mrs. Yuyi". She joined the actors and at the appropriate moment picked up the government official [(an actor) by the neck and threatened to beat him if he didn't give them all the land. This got a great laugh. Others joined the drama, singing. "Hey, you left out such-and-such an incident", and then telling the story or dramatizing it.

Lively discussion followed. People talked about all of the events of their struggle and what had happened since their victory:

"All the things we fought for are now controlled by government".

"We've let them destroy our union and now they run the show."

"All we've done is change bosses".

"When we started we had little food. Look at us now; we're still starving."

The drama sparked a lot of discussion, participation, and critical insight. Alone, however, it could not rebuild the campesino union. There was no follow-up work to build on the momentum and enthusiasm generated by the theatre performance.

EDUCATIONAL CAMPS

An informal workshop, during which a group of people who share common experiences live together for a few days.

USES

Get away from the pressures of day-to-day life.

Make time for reflection.

Learn how to gather information and to analyze it.

Develop an understanding of the larger context within which local and personal problems occur.

Develop a feeling of solidarity by exchanging experiences and finding that individuals are not alone.

Develop commitment to involvement and action through an intensive learning experience.

Plan ways to work together.

India: Women's Educational Camp

The "Adivasis" (tribal people) became landless labourers during British rule in the Dhulia District of Northern Maharashtra State. Women "adivasis" suffer double oppression. They get lower wages than men. They have to do all the work in the fields as well as all of the domestic work and childcare. Sexual harassment by the farmers is rampant. They are beaten by drunken husbands and excluded from wage negotiations by fellow male labourers.

Full-time community activists took the initiative in setting up a three-day camp so that landless women labourers could begin to develop an awareness that their problems were particular to them as women. Activists proposed the camp to villages during night meetings. Many villagers expressed doubt: "What can we discuss for two full days?"; "We cannot express ourselves well."; men asked, "Who will cook and look after children?"

Women came to the camp from 15 villages. Several came from each village. Those from nearby villages came in large numbers to the discussions and then rushed home. Women and young boys from one village took responsibility for food and water arrangements.

Opening the sessions, the activists explained that they thought a women's camp was necessary in order to increase women's participation in the labourer's movement by encouraging them to take action on women's problems.

The women introduced themselves. It was a novel experience for them to stand up and tell their names and villages with nobody to threaten them. Some women felt very shy about speaking before such a big gathering; and some felt that they should not discuss their personal problems in a group. After their initial efforts to speak out, they became bolder and their self-confidence increased. One woman explained :

"We never thought we had the strength to speak in a gathering of 150 women, that we could shout slogans in front of and against the *maaldars* (rich)".

Many described their villages and the sexual harassment they suffered from rich farmers and watchmen of the crop protection societies. Pretending to suspect a theft, watchmen would try to search women's clothing.

As the women spoke, they realized that the problems they thought were isolated and personal one, in fact, social problems. They collectively identified their problem as women: sexual harassment by the rich, wife-beating, and bootlegging.

A woman from a nearby village spoke:

"We complain that the men drink liquor, that they become corrupt due to drinking. We complain that they beat us up. We want to do some things about this problem. Our village is small. But it produces hundreds of litres of liquor, and they beat us up. We women of Karankheda are not organized. Can the other women help us? We need help".

The women at the camp decided to help. They cordoned off the village so that no bootlegger could run away. They broke all the liquor pots and bottles. They warned that any bootlegger or any man who drank and beat his wife would be heavily punished. They said that Karankheda women were not alone anymore.

By developing a collective consciousness of themselves as oppressed women, they were able to struggle not only against the rich farmers but to support each other in struggles within the family against alcoholism and wife-beating. Following the camp, groups as large as 50 went to villages and encouraged women to organize and punish husbands who beat their wives. Sometimes the guilty men were forced to bow before the women; in others, their heads were shaved.

In later camps, women looked at the "elder" system, in which older men make judgments about divorces, marriages, remarriages and fines with respect to sexual relations. They discussed myths of the male-dominated value system, such as the myth that women become unholy during menstruation. The predominantly male full-time activists made sure that there were female activists present for these discussions.

The activists, in turn, learned about the "elder" system under which these women have lived. They realized the complexity of the struggle for equality which women face because they are doubly oppressed both within the home and the larger society.

Case Studies

These experiences demonstrate a wide variety of problems, approaches, tensions and outcomes that have occurred in participatory research in very different political, social and economic contexts. The contributors, who were involved in the work, have taken pains to think critically about the process. Each, however, has had different questions in mind.

The report on a land ownership study in the rural industrial Appalachian area of the United States looks in particular at the difficulty of defining and working toward long-term goals. Critics of the Jipemoyo culture and development project among peasants in Tanzania ask whether participatory research can promote the development of socialism in Tanzania. The account of the development of peasant technology in Chile considers the constraints of living and working under a military regime. The case study on women's movement in India raises questions related to the limitations of participatory process.

United States: Land Ownership Patterns in Appalachia

Appalachia, a mountainous region stretching through six states in the Eastern United States, is the most densely populated rural area in the country. Although the area is rich in natural resources—coal, land, timber, water—most of its people live in extreme poverty. Increasing ownership of the land by corporations, often absentee, is diverting the use of the land from agriculture to coal mining and tourist recreation. Land ownership and use patterns have produced a unique class of rural industrial workers.

In 1978, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), a multimillion dollar government agency, proposed to do a study of land settlement patterns. A coalition of citizen's groups, the Appalachian Alliance, challenged the focus of the study and negotiated for the right to do a six-state study of how land *ownership* affects the settlement and use of the land.

This project illustrates the integration of the three processes of participatory research—investigation, analysis and action.

The project arose within the historical context of local protest on issues of land abuse. Action was the first major activity in the process. Major flooding in 1977 was a catalyst for

movement from local to regional organization—the Appalachian Alliance was formed. Citizens defined the problems themselves. They knew that ownership of the land by absentee corporations lay at the foundation of many social and economic problems such as wanton destruction of the land by strip mining; loss of land for housing and agriculture; flooding; a low tax base and poor social services. Within the Appalachian Alliance, a Task Force on Land was set up to work on land and taxation issues. Scholars from the Appalachian Studies Conference joined the Task Force.

The Task Force challenged the way in which knowledge had been produced and controlled by technocrats and politicians in the ARC, who defined the issue as a land settlement problem and hired high-priced consultants to conduct research.

Collective action and strategizing were necessary in order to resist ARC attempts to divide and conquer the Alliance Task Force by co-opting the more academically qualified members. Members of the Task Force analyzed the political and economic interests represented within the ARC in order to challenge those interests. They chose their own spokespersons, who were accountable to the Task Force, and refused to release their own local knowledge of land use problems until the ARC made land ownership a priority. In fact, the ARC not only made land ownership a research priority but invited the Task Force to submit a proposal for the research project. The Task Force had tested their collective power and won. Their next task was to avoid giving up control of the process by agreeing to a neutralized research design conducted by professional researchers.

They decided to submit an uncompromising proposal for a decentralized, participatory research plan to be carried out by 60 researchers. The proposal was accepted, but the ARC attempted to exert control over the research design by tying funding to negotiation on methodological issues. The threatened delay and uncertainty were a hardship for the researchers who were ready to start work. The Task Force again tested its power as a popular force by threatening to forego the entire project if the ARC did not guarantee all of the funds. The ARC backed down.

The research project itself constituted a new stage of action for the citizens involved. The 60 "citizen researchers" were diverse—members of existing groups; individuals concerned about land issues; students from college Appalachian Studies programs; and college professors. Some were paid, others worked on voluntary basis. Most had never done any formal research so training was crucial. A three-day workshop and periodic follow-up sessions taught concrete skills such as where to find data, how to fill in coding forms and how to conduct interviews. Training also emphasized the broader goals of educating local leaders and building a regional network for long-term action. The project called on professional expertise when necessary. For instance, professional researchers helped in the training sessions.

Involvement of citizen-researchers from local communities had implications for the kind of information that was collected. They understood the importance of the data for local purposes, and pages of property figures which would have been tedious, meaningless numbers for an outside expert intrigued the citizen-researchers, who knew that the numbers and names represented power and power-holders they knew. Motivated by new insights into local affairs, the researchers often took extra time to search out additional information. As a complement to the collection of the statistical data, researchers followed interesting leads to develop descriptive case studies, which involved more citizens in the process of providing information and analysing problems.

During analysis of the information in a final workshop, it became clear that people with little training and support had uncovered tremendous amounts of information which they were relating to their own lives and communities. Since the project exposed participants to information about the broader, regional situation in addition to their own local situation, they learned that their own experience was part of a larger context in which other people in other towns, cities and states shared similar experiences due to land abuse. The report-writing stage allowed the citizen-researchers to pool their new information and through discussion, debate and analysis, develop a deeper understanding of the influences of absentee land ownership on land use. Regional patterns began to appear while, simultaneously, important links were made among people from different communities facing common issues.

The report was one of the most comprehensive surveys of land ownership patterns and related impacts in the United States. It included:

- A survey of corporate and absentee ownership and related socio-economic data for 80 counties in six states.

- Extensive case studies in 20 counties, demonstrating the impact of ownership patterns on such things as jobs, environment, housing, local power structures, taxes, education and services.

The ARC were reluctant to release the final report in Spring 1982. Although they had approved the methodology they were lobbying to stay in existence under the Reagan administration. Finally, they had to bow to public pressure for release of the report however they continued to distance themselves from it. They refused to release the case studies, refused to make a press announcement, refused to supply sufficient copies of the report and hired a panel of academics and consultants to do an experts' study of the citizens' study.

The Task Force had however ensured its right to use the report as it wished after a certain date and so set up its own distribution system and issued its own press releases. Within weeks hundreds of copies of the report had been sold.

The new analysis and understanding of absentee land ownership and related problems had a collective character. To a large extent, participating communities controlled the activities of the research process and the information generated, from defining the problem and deciding what the research methods would be through to analysis and dissemination of the information. The information was gathered by the citizens themselves with reference to a problem defined by the communities involved. Methods of collection and sources of information were decided by the participants. The unique interest of concerned citizen researchers led them to ask more questions in the process of research and to search out more information. Their questions and participation in the analysis of the material made the final report a unique product of their collective interest and activity.

Participants were enthusiastic about the project as a model for citizen-based research. They felt that the way they did the study was as important as their findings.

It helped to reduce the tension between researchers and the community:

"A lot of what we were doing in Lincoln County was going on well before the land study. But I think it adds a little clout to the 'I told you so' behind some of it...This is a chance where local people have done their part and

because of all the good press work, they are not only seeing it in the county paper and the larger papers, but now on TV, where their input has produced something solid. I think now they can say... 'This time we made a statement to some people that said they were going to do some good and produce results, and we got it!'

People saw research as a way of educating people and of empowering them for further action:

"There were a lot of people involved in a lot of different issues, but the study kind of turned the lights on for a lot of local folks, showing them that there really in a sense was one problem, with just several different aspects of that problem. It got people talking together and that has continued on a regular basis..."

It helped build a network among people who were not connected until they began to work together on the study, and it helped encourage long-range community-based thinking and planning.

Serious evaluation, of course, revealed many short-comings.

While the government agency, the ARC, provided money, a measure of legitimacy and unifying antagonist, the Task Force was constantly juggling the demands of the government contract—timetables, methods, bureaucratic requirements—with its own concern for using the data for community change. It may be, however, that balancing the conflicting demands made the whole process stronger.

The volume of data caused problems. Tensions developed between the impulse to start using the data to organize local campaigns and the need to produce many formal reports, as well as popular materials like pamphlets, films, and newspaper articles. All the writing took a year and a half. One state coordinator complained:

"As we got more and more bogged down in writing, we were losing some of the context, some of the overall thing, and the support actions we could get out of it".

The very diversity of the participants raised the question of who was served by the research process. Where the Task Force took the time to recruit people directly affected by land problems, follow-up action occurred more often. Elsewhere, individual researchers learned a great deal, but a new, different base of people had to be pulled together when it came time to organize action:

"I wish we had had an opportunity, say six month's lead time to go out and make some contacts...and try to find places where local people were interested in doing the research and following all the way through the study... I think in the long run it would have been a lot easier to put together some kind of a coalition on land and tax issues if we had been able to start from stage one in that way".

Participants were not able in this experience to bridge the gap between the need for information and action on specific, immediate problems and the need for a broader analysis and vision. As one person described the dilemma:

"Part of the problem is that we acted most of the time without any serious discussion within the Task Force of a theory. What is it we are trying to do with this land study? What we've got is all this documentation about absentee ownership, but how does that move us forward? What does that tell us about change and especially American society? As a result, the change we focussed on is taxation. Well, that is good. But that's treating the symptoms, not treating the disease itself. I don't think we ever got at an understanding of what all this means. Part of what we have done is add substance to this colonial theory of the outsider—just get rid of these damn outsiders' ownership and everything will be all right. The problem is much deeper than that".

As a result of this frustration, the Task Force has begun to plan workshops where people can begin to develop visions of land reform. In the meantime, the citizen-researchers are now using the information they acquired to fight land ownership problems. The process of getting the facts they need gave them more strength for the battle.

JOHN GAVENTA and
BILL HORTON

Tanzania: Jipemoyo Project—Role of Culture in Development

Cultivating peasants are predominant in the isolated coastal district of Bagamoyo. Their staple food crop is maize supplemented by millet, cassava, rice, and a variety of beans and pulses. Cash crops grown include cotton, cashewnuts, coconuts, sesame and some tobacco. A small group of pastoralist peasants subsist mainly on livestock—cattle, goats and sheep—but their diets have become increasingly supplemented by agricultural produce such as maize. The two groups of peasants have lived in an uneasy relationship of conflicting claims over the means of production such as land for grazing and cultivating, water and social services. There are also a number of craftsmen and women who engage in black-smithery, carpentry, pottery and leather-work to meet the needs of local peasants.

In 1975, the Ministry of Culture initiated the Jipemoyo project to find ways in which culture could be used to involve local people in rural development appropriate to Tanzania's policy of Socialism and Self Reliance. Research concentrated on the following areas:

- (1) Pastoral Development
- (2) Traditional Handicrafts and the Promotion of Small Scale Industries
- (3) Promotion of Traditional Music and Dance
- (4) Creation of Archives and documentation on cultural traditions.

A large team of Tanzanian and expatriate social scientists worked in several villages. The project resulted in several economic development projects, a primary school, a livestock census, regional seminars and research projects.

The research team began their work by analyzing practical problems which the villagers identified and, in the course of working on these problems with the villagers, studied the ways in which different ethnic traditions and customs affected particular development projects. Through this approach, villagers began to see the potential benefits of cooperation with the researchers.

For instance, an ethnomusicologist found that a village of cultivating peasants were deeply concerned by a water supply problem. He worked with school children to do research on traditional methods of collecting and preserving water, and helped villagers to make plans and call upon the District and Regional authorities to provide more continuous supplies of water. After building rapport with the villagers, he worked over a period of years with a local musician to design an improved *Selo* drum, begin a small-scale drum-making industry and write a series of manuals for promoting the teaching of the *Selo ngoma* dance in Tanzanian schools.

To encourage the development of small-scale industries, a member of the research team undertook an historical materialist analysis of handicraft production in Bagamoyo District, encouraged individual craftsmen and women to begin to work together on a cooperative basis and made efforts to involve other relevant institutions in promoting small-scale industries. The research, however, highlighted problems which small-scale industries in Tanzania face: the lack of investment capital; low labour productivity; shortage of raw materials; inadequate marketing organizations; future competition from state owned production enterprises financed by international capital.

In the face of obstacles such as this, the small-scale drum-making industry has not survived.

The pastoralist peasants of the Ilparakuyo community were closed-knit and frank about their problems with the research team. Universal primary education was a serious concern. In 1976, only 14 Ilparakuyo boys attended the local primary school and no girls attended at all. Three years later, as a result of efforts of the participatory research project, 32 boys and 13 girls attended the school. A school livestock project relevant to pastoralist children was designed as well, and an Ilparakuyo primary school leaver was sent to a Teacher Training College.

In 1977, the problem of implementing universal primary education among a group of pastoralist peasants led to a seminar which looked at broader issues related to bringing pastoralists into a life-style compatible with the National plan of villagization. Pastoralists were the main speakers at the seminar, which included government officials from all levels of government. They described the changes which they felt would be practical, and the seminar led to a plan for resolutions to provide the services pastoralists would need to lead a more sedentary village life.

Pastoralists worked together with the research team on the National Livestock Census for Lugoba Ward. It had been alleged that they would not allow their cattle to be counted, but in fact each homestead realized that the area of land to be set aside for the pastoralist village would be related to the number of cattle. The full cooperation of the pastoralist was needed, since only they could tell researchers which cattle had been weaned, which were still heifers, and how many cows were in milk.

The data collected in the census enabled the research team to analyze the material conditions of the pastoralists. The government's development program called for destocking of cattle, an unpopular directive for the pastoralists. Analysis of the census proved that the pastoralists had exceeded the government destocking guidelines. Furthermore, the research demonstrated that income from the sale of cattle had increased dramatically in two years. On the basis of this information, the pastoralists decided to deduct a certain amount from the sale of each head of cattle as a contribution to a community development fund.

In the course of the research project, several seminars were held which brought villagers together with functional officers, such as cultural officers, from the Ministry, Region, District, Divisions and Wards to meet and discuss development problems.

A Tradition's Archive and Documentation Unit was developed within the Ministry of National Culture and Youth. It organized information recorded in field notes, tape recordings, photographs and articles, and its purpose was to ensure that research findings were fed back to villagers and government officials as soon as possible so that the information could be used by the people for community development.

Participatory research was accepted by the Department of Research and Planning of the Ministry of National Culture and Youth as a prerequisite for current and future research projects.

Some historical materialists working as researchers on the project have reflected critically upon it.

There were always conflicting ideological positions. The prominent split was between those who argued for a uniform theoretical framework for the project based on a historical materialist methodology and those who argued for the freedom of each researcher to develop his or her own theoretical framework. This conflict had implications for practical analysis of development problems. One issue was the role of government bureaucrats in the development process. The "independent" researchers argued that there was a lack of communication between bureaucrats and villagers and criticized the bureaucrats for not being willing to learn from the peasants and violating the ideology of the Party. The historical materialists argued that conflicting class interests arising from the historical and international context were a basic contradiction in the Tanzanian reality and were not surprised to find the bureaucrats living comfortably, in line with their petty bourgeois class interests, on the basis of the surplus produced by the peasants and workers. The conflicting approach of the researchers to the bureaucrats caused some Party and government leaders to be suspicious of the project.

Orthodox Marxists define socialism as an emergent mode of production which is premised on the historical dictatorship of the proletariat following the overthrow of the capitalist mode of production. Tanzania's socialist course, Ujamaa, however, does not advocate the overthrow of the capitalist mode of production, but plans to build socialism through evolution, not revolution.

The objective of Ujamaa is to base development on the revival of the traditional way of life which was distorted by colonialism. Some call this approach to socialism utopian, and orthodox Marxists see it as piecemeal. The entire social formation should be socialist. It is not enough, for instance, to have all the pastoralists in Tanzania become a socialist, since they form only a small minority in the country. Socialism means the seizure of state power by the workers and the peasants and it means developing and controlling the means of production. It means directing the economy to meet the demands of the people by coordi-

nating industries in relation to agriculture so as to eliminate dependence and external domination. Above all, it means changing the relations of production from capitalist relations to socialist relations. This means class struggle at all levels over several generations, and not class collaboration.

From this ideological perspective, critics see the limitations of participatory research in the Jipemoyo project. In the work with the Ilparakuyo pastoralists, there was no analysis of the class composition of the society. The pastoralists are cattle keepers and thus petty property owners. It is very likely that there is an uneven distribution of cattle in the society, so that there are rich cattle owners and poor cattle owners. What is the position of the different strata in relation to building socialism in Tanzania? It appears that only the rich pastoralists who had a bigger stake in getting more services for their livestock participated in the participatory research seminars.

Furthermore, seminars which bring together government leaders and pastoralists so that the pastoralists can explain their problems are likely to have a reformist rather than a revolutionary result. Government officials have the opportunity to respond by making slight changes in order to preserve the status quo. Participatory research may be used to harmonize problems and class relations and to maintain the oppressor class rather than to undermine it.

Critics think it unlikely also that, during the rather short period of the Jipemoyo project, the Ilparakuyo pastoralists were able to develop the ideological clarity necessary to engage in a protracted class struggle. Such clarity can only emerge under the leadership of a working class ideology in a broad class alliance with the proletariat.

In order for participatory research to promote a genuine class awareness leading to class struggle, a precise analysis of the forces involved is essential. An understanding of the nature of the struggle, the forms of the struggle and the strategies to be employed is vital. It is also necessary to learn from the experiences of other socialist struggle and to relate these to existing realities. Otherwise, participatory research can be used to deceive the people and postpone liberation of the oppressed classes.

KEMAL MUSTAFA

Chile: Peasant Technology for Self-Defense

Since the overthrow of Chilean President Salvador Allende in 1973, the economic policy of General Pinochet has been based on the laissez-faire principles of the Chicago School of Economics. The savage capitalism created by free enterprise and the political repression of the military regime have forced more than 40% of Chile's peasants to sell most of their land to agrarian entrepreneurs. As a strategy of self-defense, peasants who retained land have rejected the modern technology of the Green Revolution and returned to the simpler, less expensive traditional technology of their ancestors. Working as family units, they have produced for self-consumption rather than for the market.

The Agrarian Research Group (GIA), one of the few independent research groups in Chile, has been working with peasants in several regions to support the strategy of self-defense in a project called "Peasant Technology and Organization". There is a danger that

such a project could reinforce the marginalization of peasants and lower the wages of the rural labour force. Striving to avoid this danger, the project has adopted a participatory research approach to encourage the collective development of alternate technologies through a process of action-reflection-action that will promote increasing consciousness of the oppressive political context and lay the foundations for peasant organization.

The peasants of Huilcán Llamín, in the Province of Temuco south of Santiago, belong to the Mapuche people, a minority indigenous group whose socio-economic organization is based on communal ownership of their natural resources. They now face a systematic and final effort to dissolve their way of life, a process which began with the Spanish conquest of Chile four centuries ago. A recent law is pressuring them to sell their lands in the capitalist market. In this case, participatory research has the potential to promote social and ethnic identity as well as the recovery of traditional technologies.

In February, 1981, the local leadership organized the community to conduct a participatory investigation of technological patterns in the community. Research methods included interviews, meetings with older members of the community, questionnaires and an exhibit of traditional technologies and peasant inventions. Community leaders and GIA members organized the information and presented it to a community assembly for discussion and analysis. Discussions looked for causes of problems both within the community itself and within the context of the larger society. After several meetings, the assembly agreed on an analysis and listed crucial aspects. Major problems were:

Loss of soil fertility due to overuse of insufficient land, and the impossibility of increasing productivity with expensive chemical fertilizers.

Lack of food for and poor health of animals.

The high cost of renting a mechanical wheat harrow. Wheat is the main staple in the Mapuche diet.

Impure drinking water.

The location of the kitchen in the center of the peasant "ruca", which creates too much smoke and forces the women to cook on their knees.

Local labour and resources were mobilized to deal with some of the problems identified. At the time of this report in June, 1982, the following activities have been carried out:

Production of compost and its use in experimental plots of land.

Improvements in the cultivation of legumes.

Production of seeds in the community.

Construction of a machine to keep grass for winter.

Training in animal husbandry.

Other activities are being considered, including the establishment of a veterinary clinic; the construction of a machine for harrowing wheat which has been designed by a local person; and the construction of a community centre.

The community concluded that they had to strengthen the Mapuche People's organization, which is in the form of centres—Centros Culturales (Centres in Defense of Culture). Community membership in the centres was reinforced.

Evaluation of the project is an on-going activity. As part of the evaluation, a slide-show about the community is being produced by two community members as a tool for studying

local reality. Evaluation is an important part of National Gatherings of representatives from all communities involved in the project. Each community reports on the successes and the limitations encountered in their work. This opportunity for peasants to critique each other's work is a powerful tool for raising consciousness and for giving credibility and respectability to the work done at the local level.

A definite limitation to the work in Huilcán Llamín is the lack of women's participation due to traditional machismo of Mapuche men. The experience, furthermore, has not been documented well enough so that it can be a useful example to other groups in the region and in other parts of Chile. By far the most serious limitation, however, is the political context of the country. Both fear and individualism are strongly reinforced by the mass media and repressive State institutions. These conditions impede the development of the full collective capacity of the Huilcán Llamín community for creative action. Participatory research can contribute to overcoming such obstacles.

FRANCISCO VIO GROSSI

India: Tribal Women Organize

Dhulia district is in the north of Maharashtra State. Shahada and Taloda are two most fertile *taluks* (blocks) of Dhulia. The *adivasis* (tribals) in this area are mostly landless labourers.

Land owned by tribals was forcibly cultivated by the rich farmers. The *adivasis* had lost their right on most of the land. Conditions were oppressive for all the labourers, but even more so for the women. Rich farmers considered tribal women as something to be used and abused. Sexual harrasment was rampant. Women were insecure not only in lonely fields but even in their own huts. The police and the forest officials had their own share of 'pleasure' at the cost of women.

Women used to get lower wages than men and had to do double duty.

The struggle for liberation of land and against atrocities began with the above background. Women participated more in the wage struggle and millitantly at Pariwardha.

At Pariwardha women had to assert their right to negotiate their own wages. Rich farmers and male representatives of labourers were against women negotiating their wages.

With such experiences, it was thought necessary to attempt to increase participation of women. With this in mind a camp was arranged by the activists. Women enthusiastically participated though initially they had doubts about their capacity to participate in discussions.

In the camp women realised the oneness of problems faced by women in all the villagers. Through apparently simple things like mutual introductions, they had become more confident. And in the camp itself, they decided to act about the problem faced by women from a nearby village. They went to the village, broke liquor pots and warned men that they should not become alcoholics and never should beat their wives. It was a practical lesson for both women and men. Women realised that by acting unitedly they can attempt to solve their problems and as women they were not as powerless as they were made to think. This led to a chain of actions planned and executed by women and a process of awakening started. Women took up various issues. In the course of time of 5-6 years, the women

formed their own autonomous organization, a bold and important step towards liberation. The activists participating in this process believed in equality of human beings and with this attitude they had supported women at village Pariwardha. With women, the activists argued that women should negotiate their own wages and not allow men to act on their behalf. This attitude could lead to a clearer perspective of women's problems. After the study camp, a self critical attitude remained alive and gave vigour to the ongoing efforts.

This is a case study which clearly brings out the necessity of clear understanding of participatory principles. The women's camp was planned by the male activists themselves. The goals and the methodology of the camp was quite vague. This vagueness was quite natural as part of the learning process of the activists. But a clearer perspective may have made a difference. The activists were quite unclear about who should control the decisions about the camp and the proceedings of the camp. And so it is more possible that the male activists were actually controlling the process.

This case study also shows that if the activists are sensitive enough, they can work towards strengthening the participatory process and developing their own clarity about the problems. And this led to the formation of an autonomous organization of women, meaning the male activists were to play only a supportive role. After the camp the women agitated against wife beating and alcoholism, they started questioning the 'elders system' amongst the tribals, (Grown up men discuss and decide issues like divorces, marriage, etc., women are not part of it).

In the camp, and even afterwards, the women did not have a 'clear' idea about the total social system, the position of women in other classes and castes, the various political parties, their own attitudes, the women's movement in other countries. These limitations bring into focus the limitations of the method itself. After all, the participatory method is not a magic with which one can help to develop critical thinking and system analysis in a matter of days. The women and the toiling people are suffering for ages and are denied the right to have knowledge. The process through which the toiling people can become masters of their own future is a very long drawn process and no magic wand can overcome those objective limitations.

The choice is about the most sincere and sensible approach towards research and social action. And if the activists were more conscious about their choice, may be they would have acted in a different manner and would have been more helpful to the cause of women's liberation.

VIJAY KANHARE

Issues to Consider

Goals

Control

Role of the Participatory Researcher

Training

Participatory Evaluation

Guidelines for Participatory Research

Obstacles and Limitations

Goals

As we have seen, participatory research can lead to a broad range of results, including:

Acquiring skills: research, technical, training, analytical.

Developing appropriate technology for meeting local economic needs.

Producing materials: research reports, training manuals, curriculum materials, audio-visual materials, blueprints for action.

Structural analysis: making connections between personal and/or local situations and their broader historical national and international context.

Building organizations for further action: committees, cooperatives, local, regional, national, international networks.

Political action.

Dissemination of the participatory research approach.

Results vary a great deal according to the particular conditions under which the work is carried out. Many factors may influence results:

Sources of funding and personnel.

Which interest groups in the constituency are involved in the research.

Length of time of the project.

Political consciousness of the groups involved at the start of the project.

Political and economic conditions—degree of repression and oppression.

Point in community action in which participatory research is adopted.

Primary activity of the project—investigation, analysis or action.

Who initiates the project—someone within the community or someone from outside.

The particular focus of participatory research at any one time depends on the specific conditions experienced by the group or community who undertake it. The ability of a group to decide what activities and goals are realistic is critical to the entire process.

Since not everything can be accomplished at once, it is best to think in terms of short-term and long-term goals.

A short-term objective of participatory research is to produce a collective understanding of the local situation which can lead to action on problems directly and immediately affecting participants in the research effort. While working to meet immediate needs, participants may find that by learning and acting together, they can create the power to make changes in their social conditions.

It is important, through frequent reflection and evaluation, to make sure that the method of meeting immediate needs doesn't interfere with the long-term goals of the constituency.

With time, there may be movement from a focus on immediate needs in the constituency to collective analysis and action at a broader level of society—the whole village, or organization, or union, or region or nation.

Control

Participatory research is a tool which oppressed people can use to begin to take control of the economic and political forces which affect their lives. Control of the participatory research process itself by the participants is one important step toward empowerment. Control ensures that the new knowledge created arises from their own experience, relates to their perceived needs and is used for their own benefit.

Participants already have valuable knowledge. They do not start from zero in the process. People have, after all, traditionally survived on the basis of knowledge created by investigation into their environment. However, they engage in participatory research because they want to advance their knowledge about some aspect of their social lives and/or physical environment in order to improve living conditions.

The participatory research approach enables participants to discover how things work in their own world by deciding what questions to ask, how to gather the information and how to organize the information according to criteria which are important to them. At the same time, the process of research is demystified and participants realize that they can often do the same kind of work that so-called experts do.

The new knowledge may be used within the constituency for its own internal self-education. It may, however, be necessary to share information and in other ways to communicate with the larger society. In particular, this is necessary when a constituency needs

financial and/or political support from sympathetic groups within the larger society as well as from government institutions. The choice, however, should be up to the constituency.

Role of the Participatory Researcher

Groups and communities often work together with people from outside who have special skills—as researchers, educators, organizers and/or technicians. The initiative, in fact, frequently comes from outside the constituency. They may accept the initiative because the project offers skills and services which they want and need.

When you begin participatory research, whether you are from outside the constituency or belong to it, you and the local group should discuss your respective roles, reach agreement on clear terms of reference for yourselves and ensure local interest, control and direction in the project.

As a participatory researcher, you need to be aware of certain qualities, skills, knowledge and attitudes which will promote local control and contribute to expanding the participation of local people in all stages of the research process:

(1) A willingness to deepen your knowledge of the local and greater situation by constant observation, listening, questioning, discussion and analysis.

When possible, you should live, eat and work with the local people. This is a good way to learn about their concrete conditions. It is also an important way to become aware of indigenous patterns of communication and decision-making, indigenous technologies and other local resources already in place and available as a foundation for participatory research.

(2) A growing understanding of the political, social and economic situation at the local level and its national and international context. This is important in order:

To know whom you are working with in the constituency—the most oppressed or elites whom it is easier to reach.

*Laedza Batanani, the popular theater program in Botswana, found that their campaigns reflected the viewpoints and interests of government extension workers and cattle owners rather than the poorer majority of rural people who did not own cattle.

*The grain storage project in Bwakira Chini took special measures to reach the poorer peasants in addition to the elite peasants who had already adopted modern technology.

To be able to facilitate study of root causes of local problems among the people you are working with.

To understand the constraints within which the participatory research must be conducted.

(3) A willingness to be self-critical and to seek out and be open to criticism from the constituency. You may, unwittingly, make assumptions about a group that are false. You may fall into a style of working that is inappropriate for the participatory process, especially if the local people regard you as an expert and treat you with reserve or deference.

Male activists working with women labourers in the educational camp in India realized that a deep-seated male chauvinism was expressed in seemingly small comments and attitudes. They constantly attempted to correct this tendency. They also found that in study circles they sometimes failed to decide topics of discussion together with the women, thus wasting valuable time on unnecessary or inappropriate topics.

(4) An ability to ask critical, hard questions while leaving the final decisions up to the constituency. Hopefully, you can bring a fresh perspective to the problem at hand through technical know-how, analytical skills, knowledge of the structural context within which local problems occur, etc. It is important to ask whether short-term plans will lead to long-term goals.

(5) A commitment to long-term, frequent involvement with the constituency. This is the only way to be a truly responsible, equal participant in the process of investigation and action. Fundamental social change cannot be carried out according to an exact timetable.

(6) A commitment to sharing the risks of reaction from and repression by those in power that a participatory research process may lead to. A person who leaves when the going gets rough is certainly irresponsible and very likely a danger to the community.

(7) A commitment to transferring your skills to members of the constituency, where appropriate. We need to demystify the role of the outside expert and demonstrate that participatory research and technical skills are things that local people can learn. It is necessary, of course, to negotiate an appropriate division of labour. There may be activities which local groups do not want to take responsibility for in the short-term. For instance, people who are not accustomed to doing much writing may not want to use their limited time and resources writing reports in the format required by funding agencies.

(8) A commitment to making the interests of the constituency a priority over your personal interests (such as writing a book, making money, advancing a career), the interests of the academic and scientific community and the funding bodies themselves.

You may have to play a delicate role in facilitating negotiations between the constituency and powerful outside interests. It is easier to ensure accountability to the constituency if you are employed directly by it, but this is not always possible.

Training

Training is extremely important for participatory researchers. Necessary for learning and/or strengthening skills in the various methods of participatory research, training sessions are crucial for developing an accurate analysis of the social, economic and political context of the community, upon which effective action ultimately depends.

Ideally, training should be an on-going process, during which practitioners come together periodically to reflect on their field experience. This is a time when new information can be added to the process of analysis through discussions with other people, impressions and assumptions can be confirmed or rejected, and the next steps for investigation, analysis and action can be planned.

Training sessions also provide an opportunity to transfer skills to local people.

Participatory Evaluation

Periodic and systematic evaluation promotes empowerment among participants in participatory research. The constituency can learn from previous experience so that in the future better structures can be developed to:

- Increase democratic participation in and control of the process of investigation, analysis and action.

- Achieve the intended product of the work, such as new technology or acquisition of land, or literacy.

Self-evaluation can be carried out by the constituency as a learning process. Constituents may, however, prefer to work with an outside consultant who can suggest ways of systematizing the inquiry. The outside consultant can also provide perspective on the project and contribute to the learning process by asking challenging questions that may not occur to those directly involved.

It may be necessary to work with an outside evaluator when the purpose of the evaluation is accountability to a funding agency. In this case, both the constituency and the evaluator need to ensure that the process of evaluation and the information generated are controlled by the constituency. Funding agencies may support the principle of constituency participation and control, but evaluations for accountability usually focus on quantifiable cost-benefit indicators of concrete results. Evaluation for accountability can also be a learning process for the constituency and, of course, the same information may be of use to both parties.

Participants and outside evaluators can structure the evaluation so that:

- Different information is collected and/or selected to meet the needs of different audiences—the participants, the funding agency, the government, the general public.

- Participants learn the skills of evaluation from outside evaluators.

Ideally, evaluation should be planned to take place throughout a project, covering these broad areas:

- **Beginning:** Clarify objectives; set up record-keeping systems; file key documents; record decisions and their rationale.

- **Middle:** formative evaluation—What is going wrong? What is going right? What needs to be changed? Review funder-project relations, if any.

- **End:** Summative evaluation—lessons learned; achievements; failures; recommendations for the future. If the objective has not been achieved, why not? Was the goal unrealistic? Were strategies for achieving it unrealistic or inappropriate?

Obstacles and Limitations

The problems which are the focus of a participatory research process grow out of the history of the people involved—their active experiences and their real social needs. These may be responses to specific social, economic or political crises or they may be of a more

QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

INITIATION AND CONTROL

WHO INITIATES?

WHO DEFINES THE PROBLEM?

WHO PAYS?

CRITICAL CONTENT

WHAT IS STUDIED?

WHY?

BY WHOM?

COLLECTIVE ANALYSIS

HOW IS INFORMATION GATHERED?

BY WHOM?

HOW IS DATA ANALYSED? BY WHOM?

LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPED

WHAT IS LEARNED?

WHO DEVELOPS WHAT SKILLS?

WHAT ARE THE PRODUCTS AND BY-PRODUCTS?

USES FOR ACTION

HOW ARE RESULTS DISSEMINATED?

WHO USES THEM? HOW ARE THEY USED?

WHO BENEFITS?

day-to-day nature. Examples in the Introduction have taken place in a wide variety of political environments (some of which are extremely repressive), in a broad range of social, economic and cultural situations, and within very different organizational structures. Each has encountered obstacles to accomplishing both short-term and long-term goals. This is not surprising. The shift from investigation and learning to successful social action, and from small-scale social change to major structural change are the hardest to make. This is the reality of social change.

Participatory research is often initiated by people from outside the constituency who have technical expertise of one kind or another or by a small and relatively skilled leadership within the constituency. It is not easy to transfer organizational, technical and analytical skills to all people within the group or community involved. How successful "trainers" are in transferring these skills has implications for the degree to which the participatory research process is controlled by the people themselves.

A major obstacle to the goals of participatory research is, of course, the very power of the dominant forces. Domination takes the form of ideological oppression which permeates all social institutions and shapes the ways in which we think. It is sometimes exercised by sheer brute force. As researchers, educators and organizers we face it at a daily level in the financial and bureaucratic control that is exercised at many points in a process of social action. Participatory research is often undertaken in the form of projects funded by government agencies, academic institutions or community development agencies which represent the interests of those in power. We must work within the practical limitations of available funds, reporting deadlines and the time constraints of relatively short-term funding. It is a strategic choice to use institutional resources for work aimed at social change. It will take strategic planning and organization to overcome institutional control.

Major social change depends on the struggles of strong social movements. Although the work of participatory research has been interdisciplinary and field-based, a great deal of the activity has taken place within the broad areas of adult education. Communication and cooperation need to be established and strengthened among those with skills in participatory research and community activists who have skills in organizing and mobilizing. Each can learn from the other; in fact the challenge of participatory research is for us to be both educators and organizers/mobilizers.

The democratic approach of participatory research can strengthen existing social movements as well as contribute to building new popular organizations. Many of the groups using participatory research are linked with social movements, such as peasants and landless labourers, industrial workers, women's groups and Indigenous Peoples. These links need to be encouraged in participatory research work. The potential for participatory research within a community or an organization or a workplace will be limited if it is not associated with a movement that can challenge economic and political power at the local, national and/or international level. Only social and political movements can mobilize resources and promote investigation, analysis and action on a large scale. We need to find ways to improve communication with activists at these levels as well.

Reflections

I'm wonderfully happy I came into the world,
I love its earth, its light, its struggle and its bread.

...

The world for me is unbelievably big.
I would have liked to go around the world
and see the fish, the fruits, and the stars that I haven't
seen.

...

Nevertheless,
From China to Spain, from the Cape of Good Hope to Alaska,
In every nautical mile, in every kilometre, I have friends
and enemies.

Such friends that we haven't met even once—
We can die for the same break, the same freedom, the same
dream.

And such enemies that they're thirsty for my blood,
I am thirsty for their blood.

My strength
Is that I'm not alone in this big world.
The world and its people are not secret in my heart,
no mystery in my science.

Calmly and openly

I took my place
in the great struggle.

NAKIM HIKMET, TURKEY
1939

Humanity is wider than all the sea and her necklace of islands
and we must fall into it as down a well to clamber back with
streams of secret water, profound truths.

PABLO NERUDA, CHILE

There he goes
the man
with downcast eyes.
His back seen through his torn shirt
bearing a heavy burden
of ignorance and fear.
He does not cry out his longings
lest he perturb a world
which dazzles him
with the false glitter of its fake gold.

Yet
he was already a gentleman
he was a sage
before the laws of Kepler
he was fearless
before combustion engines

**This same man
this misery...**

**It is for his days of glory
that I yearn**

ANGOSTINHO NETO, ANGOLA

I have to cast my lot with those who age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power reconstitute the world.

ADRIENNE RICH, UNITED STATES

As we go marching, marching
in the beauty of the day
a million darkened kitchens
a thousand mill-lofts gray
are touched with all the radiance
that a sudden sun discloses
for the people hear us singing
bread and roses, bread and roses

As we go marching, marching
we battle too for men
for they are women's brothers
and we'll march with them again
Our lives shall not be seated
from birth until life closes
hearts starve as well as bodies
give us bread, but give us roses

As we go marching, marching
unnumbered women dead
go crying through our singing
their ancient call for bread
Small art and love and beauty
their drudging spirits knew
yes, it is bread we fight for
but we fight for *roses* too

As we go marching, marching
We bring the greater days
the rising of the women
is the rising of the race
No more the drudge and idler
ten that toil where one reposes
but a sharing of life's glories
bread and roses, bread and roses

JAMES OPPENHEIM, UNITED STATES

1912

Written for the women of the

Lawrence strike

The International Participatory Research Network

The network provides a link for communication, cooperation and mutual support among adult educators, researchers and community workers who use participatory research in their work. Periodically, we come together for regional and international workshops and conferences to reflect critically on our work. We welcome new participants. There are six regional teams in the network, loosely coordinated by the International Council for Adult Education (I.C.A.E.). Please contact:

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